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this one source that Nuer attention, instead of being diffused in a variety of directions, tends, with undue exclusiveness, to be focused on this single object and to be introvertive, since the object has a certain identity with themselves. We will now examine briefly some linguistic material wherein we shall perceive further evidence of this hypertrophy of a single interest and of the identification of men with cattle to which I have alluded.

VIII

Linguistic profusion in particular departments of life is one of the signs by which one quickly judges the direction and strength of a people's interests. It is for that reason, rather than for its intrinsic importance, that we draw the reader's attention to the volume and variety of the Nuer cattle vocabulary. Like all the pastoral Nilotes they use an enormous number of words and phrases about cattle and the tasks of herding and dairy-work, and from this vast assortment we select for comment a single class: the terms by which they describe cattle, chiefly by reference to their colours.[1] These terms are more than a linguistic technique which enables Nuer to speak of cattle with precision in situations of practical husbandry and in the many social contexts in which they figure, for they establish associations on the one hand between wild creatures and cattle and on the other hand between cattle and their masters; they furnish certain ritual categories; and they greatly enrich the language of poetry.

In naming a Nuer cow one has to notice its colours and the way in which they are distributed on its body. When it is not of one colour the distribution of colours is the significant character by which one names it. There are ten principal colour terms: white (*bor*), black (*car*), brown (*lual*), chestnut (*dol*), tawny (*yan*), mouse-grey (*lou*), bay (*thiang*), sandy-grey (*lith*), blue and strawberry roan (*yil*), and chocolate (*gwir*). When a cow is of a single colour it is described by one of these terms. An animal may combine two or more colours, but a combination of more than two, known as *cuany*, is very rare. Normally there is a combination of white with one other colour and twelve common distributions of this com-

[1] I have recorded some information on this neglected subject among a neighbouring people in 'Imagery in Ngok Dinka Cattle-Names', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, 1934.

Pp. 42-43 contain no textual material

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bination are shown in Figs. 8 and 9. There are, however, many more combinations, at least twenty-seven, one of the commonest being varieties of a striped or brindled coat (*nyang*).

In describing a beast one often denotes both the form of distribution and the colour that is combined with white. Thus an ox may be entirely mouse-grey (*lou*); have a mainly mouse-grey colour with a white face (*kwe looka*), white back (*kar looka*), white splash on barrel (*bil looka*), white shoulder (*rol looka*), or white belly (*reng looka*): be brindled mouse-grey (*nyang looka*): be white with large mouse-grey patches (*rial looka*), medium mouse-grey patches (*kwac looka*), or a mouse-grey rump (*jok looka*), &c. There are at least a dozen terms describing different combinations of white and mouse-grey and there are a similar number of terms for a combination of white with each of the other colours. A further example is given to illustrate the wide range of variations: a white shoulder and foreleg (*rol*) may be found on a cow of any colour, e.g. *rol cara*, *rol yan*, *rol thiang*, *rol yili*, &c. There may also be a combination of one form of distribution with another and, in this case, the two combinations constitute the terms of reference and there is no need to denote the colouring that occurs in them, e.g. a white shoulder and foreleg (*rol*) may be combined with a white face (*kwe roal*), black spots (*rol kwac*), speckling (*rol cuor*), brown patches (*rol paara*), white back (*kar roal*), white face and black ears (*kur roal*), &c. There are at least twenty-five terms which include the *rol* distribution, and the other distributions likewise have wide ranges of combinations with colours and with one another.

As I shall elsewhere, and at length, analyse the principles of colour terminology and abstract the rules of nomenclature,[1] I need no more than remark here that it is evident from the few examples cited that there are several hundred colour permutations.

Some colours and combinations of colours are associated with animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, and this association is often indicated by secondary terms of reference and by ritual usages, e.g. *lou* (mouse-grey) is the bustard, *nyang* (striped) is the crocodile, *lith* (sandy-grey) is associated with *manlieth*, the grey kestrel, *thiang* (bay) is the tiang, *dwai* (brown with white stripes) is the female sitatunga, *kwe* (white-faced) is the fish eagle, *kwac* (spotted) is the leopard, *cuor* (speckled) is the vulture, *gwong* (spotted) is the guinea-fowl, *nyal* (brown-spotted) is the python, &c. These linguistic identifications and other colour associations lead to many

[1] 'Nuer Cattle Terms', to appear in *Sudan Notes and Records*.

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fanciful elaborations of nomenclature, e.g. a black ox may be called *rual mim*, charcoal-burning or *won car*, dark clouds; a brown ox *riem dol*, red blood, or *riŋ dol*, red tree-cobra; a blue roan ox *bany yiel* after the blue heron; a mouse-grey ox *duk lou*, the shady gloom of forests, &c. These fancy names add greatly to the list of Nuer cattle terms.

Besides the vast vocabulary which refers to colours, distribution of colours, and colour associations, cattle can also be described by the shape of their horns and, as the horns of oxen are trained, there are at least six common designations in use besides several fancy names. Words denoting shape of horns add considerably to the number of permutations, for they can be combined with many of the colour and distribution terms, e.g. a sandy-grey cow with horns which almost meet in a curve above the head is a *duot lieth*, a shorthorn with *rial* markings is a *cot rial*, a brindled ox with one horn trained across its face is a *gut nyang*, &c. The ears of cattle, sheep, and goats are often cut in different shapes and it is permissible, and with sheep and goats usual, to describe them by reference to these incisions. Sheep and goats have very different mixtures of colours from those one finds among cattle, but the same terms can be used to cover all combinations, because they are never exact descriptions of colour dispositions but represent ideal distributions, to one or other of which any actual disposition approximates.

A further range of permutations is created by prefixes which denote the sex or age of an animal, e.g. *tut*, bull, *yang*, cow, *thak*, ox, *nac*, heifer, *ruath*, male calf, *dou*, female calf, *kol*, calf which has not yet begun to graze, and so forth. Thus one may speak of a *tut ma kar looka*, *dou ma rial*, *thak ma cuany*, &c. Indeed, if we were to count every possible mode of referring to animals of the flocks and herds they would be found to number several thousand expressions—an imposing and complicated system of ramifications which bears eloquent witness to the social value of cattle.

Furthermore, as we have mentioned, every man takes one of his names from the term by which one of his oxen is described, and these ox-names are the preferred salutations among age-mates. A youth generally takes his first ox-name from the beast his father gives him at his initiation, but he may later

15: Butt E-4 (No date) 1952 FJ22 Nuer FJ22

AGE-SET ORGANISATION

INITIATION

Formerly boys were initiated at the age of 16 to 18, each village making its arrangements independently. The ceremony usually takes place after the rains. The officer in charge of initiation into age sets is the wut *ghok* (the man of the cattle). He opens the period when initiation may take place, 'when the knife is brought out' *(ngoa kan rar)* and closes it 'when the knife is hung up' *(ba ngoa ngah)*. At the beginning of an initiation period the cattle expert kills a bullock, a big dance is held and he makes a speech opening a new period of initiation. In each tribe there is a cattle expert whose authority is acknowledged in matters concerning age-set organisation.

At the initiation ceremony 6 deep cuts are made across the forehead of the boy, extending from ear to ear. After the cutting *(gar)* the boys, who suffer great pain, are shut up in a hut for two days. There is a period of confinement (lasting one to two weeks) which is followed by one of mild licence. During the whole of this time the initiates must strictly avoid any contact with cattle. Finally, cleansing ceremonies are carried out and a concluding ceremony and dance. After this the youths are recognised as adults and enter into normal adult life and affairs, and into lifelong contact with the herds.

AGE SETS

All boys initiated during a number of successive years belong to a single age set *(ric)*. Until recently there was a four years' interval between the end of one set and the beginning of the next, and this was the period when the man of the cattle hung up his knife and no more initiations were held.

The age sets are organised independently in each tribe, but it often happens that, when a new set has been started in one tribe, an adjacent tribe will follow suit.(1) A set usually lasts for ten years before being cut and there are generally members of six sets alive at any one time. The names of the sets are not uniform for the whole of Nuerland, and they are not repeated. Each age set has two or three subdivisions, each with a separate name. Subdivisions are made up of those initiated together in one year or possibly the combined initiates of two years. All the members of a set are known by the name of the first division. At initiation the individual enters the set in which he will remain for the rest of his life. The members of a set have a common name, equal status, and observe certain patterns of behaviour towards one another and towards members of senior and junior sets (see below p.148).

The sets are not specifically graded as boys, warriors, and elders, as in some forms of age-set organisation, nor have they any political, juridical or military functions. Their importance is of a social nature in that a person's position in the age-set structure determines his social behaviour. Milking and other women's work is forbidden to a youth after

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, 1940, p.250.

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regarded as quite independent conceptions. We must distinguish here between class names and individual or personal names. The reason why Nuer divide the spirits into kinds, spirits of the above, spirits of the below, *colwic* spirits, *bieli*, and so forth, is that they regard them as different sorts of manifestation of Spirit and of varying degrees of importance. This is a matter I discuss later. It is rather the individual names with which we are immediately concerned.

The reason why some of the refractions have distinguishing names is, I think, mainly a matter of ownership. We have seen that, in the sense already defined (p. 44), Spirit can be owned by persons. Now, no one in this sense owns God, but all the various spirits may be owned by persons; and it may be said that the most distinctive naming of them is where individual ownership is most marked, in the case of the spirits of the air and the fetish spirits, which have proper names and ox-names. A prophet who is inspired by Spirit has in the logic of the situation to give it a name which distinguishes it as his particular spirit from the spirits of other prophets of his neighbourhood who are his rivals for renown and influence; for the attachment here is to individuals who build up through it a personal following, and not, at least primarily, to social groups. When a spirit falls from above and enters into a man who becomes its prophet it attains individuality by revealing through the prophet what it is called—its name; and when a person becomes possessed for the first time the immediate endeavour of his neighbours is to get the spirit to reveal its name when he is in a dissociated state. The spirit gets its name, the *numen* gets its *nomen*, by being owned by the person it possesses and to whom, by possessing him, it brings power and prestige. Fetishes are also owned by individuals who compete, though in a different way from prophets, for prestige and power against one another, so they must have distinguishing names. Thus it is through the name that ownership is established. The individuality is, in a sense, that of the person and not that of the spirit, the spirit getting its name through him.

The conclusion we have reached is that the conception of *kwoth* has a structural dimension. At one end Spirit is thought of in relation to man and the world in general as omnipresent God. Then it is thought of in relation to a variety of social groups and activities and to categories of persons: to political movements

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411 782 for the whole person.[1] It is for this reason that a spear must be carried during the invocation and not in order to slay the animal at the end of it. Other invocations by other men may follow before that is done, and the quick dramatic thrust into its heart which concludes the rite may be made by anyone, and not necessarily by a man who has made an invocation or by a spear used in the invocation.

411 782 614 But we have also to note that on many sacrificial occasions—those of a collective kind held in structural situations—when a man makes an invocation he does so as the representative of his clan (where 'clan' is used in this context 'clan or lineage' is to be understood—a man may be speaking in reference to his maximal lineage). He identifies himself with the clan by identifying his spear with that of the ancestor of the clan. It is his own spear which he brandishes but the name of the spear he shouts out as he does so is that of the spear of the ancestor of the clan, the clan spear-name. This is characteristic of sacrifices of the collective type, and it is towards them that the discussion is now directed.

[552] Each of the Nuer clans has a spear-name and sometimes a large lineage of a clan has a secondary name which is different from that of another lineage of the same clan. This spear-name is shouted out by a representative of the clan while he brandishes a spear in his right hand, in war, at weddings, and on other public occasions when the clan as a whole is concerned—ideally, that is, and never actively and corporately. It is especially shouted out as an exordium to sacrificial invocations on occasions of collective significance (pp. 288–9). It is '*mut gwara*', 'the spear of our fathers'. On such of these occasions as require the services of a leopard-skin priest he calls out the spear-name '*mut Geaka*', 'spear of Gee', a spear-name which combines the representation of the priestly office with that of the Nuer as a whole.

It is essential to note that, with two exceptions, no actual spears of the ancestors of the clans exist, and it is not held by Nuer that they ever did exist, except in the sense that the ancestors had their own spears. The virtue is in the idea of 'the spear of our fathers', not in any material clan relic. Consequently, in invocations any spear will serve the purpose of the rite and represent that of the

[1] Among the Shilluk the officiant rubs his spear on the back of the victim, as the Nuer places his right hand on its back (D. S. Oyler, *Sudan Notes and Records*, 1920, p. 298).

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411 association with the spirit *wiu* through the further association of
614 this spirit with lightning and hence with the idea of striking, so that the spear *wiu*, perhaps also because it has a material existence, has become the prototype of clan 'spears'. Of the other spear, that of the Thiang clan and tribe, who occupy a territory I have not myself visited, we are told by Mr. B. A. Lewis only in whose possession it is and that it is called *mut bah thiang*.[1] Dr. P. P. Howell, who gives its name as *mut bar thiang*, tells me that he has not seen it but Nuer have described it to him as being nearly worn through with much polishing. It is unknown whether any cultic practices like those I have mentioned above are connected with it.

411 Apart from the Gaatgankir and the Thiang spears the spear-
614 symbols of the Nuer clans and lineages are only names. Through
613 the association of a tribal community with the clan dominant in it the spear-name of this clan is shouted out in invocations when
552 the whole tribe goes to war but, except in this context, which I discuss below, in which a political group is merged conceptually with a clan or lineage, it is only called out in reference to a descent group as an exclusive group. Thus, when I asked a Wot tribesman whether his tribe had a tribal spear he replied: 'We have many spears. One lineage (*gol*) has one spear, another lineage has another spear, a third lineage has a different spear, and so on.' By 'spear' he meant a spear-name, not an actual spear. Consequently, if two
[582] persons have the same spear-name there is likelihood of agnatic relationship, and spear-names are therefore often spoken of in connexion with proposed marriages. One hears Nuer saying in discussions about the permissibility of a proposed marriage 'what about their spears?', 'they have the same spear, they cannot marry', or 'their spear is different to ours, we can marry their
[585] daughter'.[2] At a wedding the masters of ceremonies on the bride's side and on the bridegroom's side, each acting as representative
411 of his clan, begin their formal announcements that the marriage
614 negotiations have reached a successful conclusion (*twoc ghok*)
613 by shouting out their clan spear-names. The spear-name is also
597 shouted out by the master of ceremonies as the opening words of
552 the sacrificial invocation he makes when a Dinka boy is adopted

[1] B. A. Lewis, op. cit., p. 82.

[2] Should the two clans have the same spear-name this is not always a bar to the union, for secondary spear-names may indicate that they belong to different clans, or other circumstances may be taken into consideration.

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into the lineage of the man who has given him domicile, the expression for adopting being either *lath buthni*, to be given shares (in sacrificial meats) and hence to be given agnation, or *lath muot*, to be given a spear (-name), and hence to be made a member of the clan. He also shouts it out in sacrificial invocations at mortuary ceremonies, at settlement of blood-feuds, at initiations, and on other occasions which concern the whole clan (p. 288). When, as mentioned above, clan and tribe are identified politically in war and raiding a representative of the dominant clan of the tribe brandishes a spear and calls out the spear-name of his clan on behalf of the whole tribe. This man, called *ngul*,[1] is usually, perhaps always, a leading man of the senior lineage of the dominant clan, that descended from the eldest son of the ancestor of the clan. Thus in the Lou tribe this rite is performed by a man of the Gaaliek lineage of the Jinaca clan. Likewise the Tar lineage who have charge of the *wiu* spear are descendants of Thiang, the eldest son of the founder of the clan; and the Thiang clan who own the *thiang* spear are descended from Thiang, the eldest son of Gee.

I cannot always explain the meaning of these spear-names or even translate them, and Nuer themselves cannot always say for certain what they mean, for they arose in ancient days. It is clear, however, that they are charged with symbols expressing the unity and continuity of clans and lineages. I give a few examples, choosing those in which the meaning is more or less evident. The Jiruet lineage have *mut tora*, spear of the monorchid. This lineage respects monorchids, whether they be man or beast. The Gaatiek clan have *mut yier*, spear of the stream, because their ancestor came out of a stream. The Gaatnaca clan have *mut ghama*, spear of the thigh. This seems to refer to the loins of the ancestor from whom they sprang. The Gaaliek lineage of this clan have the secondary spear-name *mut tang*, spear of the spear-shaft, because the *ngul*, whom I have referred to above, of the Lou tribe is of this lineage. He uses a spear-shaft in war ritual. The Gaatleak clan have *mut leak*, the word *leak* being simply, it would seem, taken from the clan name itself. Many leopard-skin priests are members

[1] He is also called *ngul ghok*, *ngul* of cattle, an expression which probably refers to the taking of enemy cattle on raids, and *gwan muot*, possessor of the spear. As he may break a spear-shaft in two and throw the pieces in the direction of the enemy he is further known as *gwan tang*, possessor of the spear-shaft. I was told that he may also invoke God for success in hunting in time of famine.

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of this clan and, as I have explained, they use *mut Geaka*, spear of Gee, as an alternative expression. The Thiang lineage have a secondary spear-name *mut Thiang*, spear of Thiang, which is the name of their ancestor.

When a man calls out his clan spear-name he often does so with embellishments, which are further symbolical representations of the clan. They refer to its ancestor, its spirits, its totems, its ghosts, its cattle, or its origin and traditions. Thus a Gaatgankir clansman in making invocations adds to *mut wiu* such expressions as *mut kwe*, *mut jangemo me coali Kir*, and *mut gwara*. *Kwe* is the fish-eagle and also a colour distribution of cattle. The shining of the spear is likened to the white face of the fish-eagle against its black body and to the white splash on the head of a dark coloured cow or ox. *Jaangemo me coali Kir* means 'that Dinka who is called Kir' and refers to the Dinka origin of the clan. *Mut gwara* means 'spear of our fathers'. The spear in the hand of the speaker, the spear *wiu*, the spear used to cut open the gourd in which the ancestor was found, and the spirit *wiu* all seem to be fused in the representation. In a similar manner the Gaawar clan may add to their spear-name *mut wang*, spear of the eye (I think), such expressions as *mut nhial*, *mut puara*, and *mut kwoth nyota*. I do not know why the spear is called 'spear of the eye' (if that is the right translation). *Nhial* is the firmament and *puar* is a cloud. Their ancestor fell from the sky and the clan is therefore associated with sky, clouds, and rain. When he fell he had in his hand a sprig of the *nyuot* tree, a tree associated with rain. Hence the *kwoth nyota*, the spirit of the *nyuot* tree.

Thus the spear-name is either that of the ancestor of the lineage or clan or in some way signifies him, and the elaborations of it, such as by reference to a spirit or a totem, are also just different ways of denoting the lineage or clan as a whole; for the name of the ancestor stands for the whole clan, both here and elsewhere. We have noted earlier (p. 169) how in myths a lineage is personified for the purpose of the action of the story, the name of the lineage or of its tribal territory being used to indicate its ancestor. Nuer sometimes even insert the name of a lineage into a genealogy as its founder, though the form of the word shows that it is the name of a group and not of a person; or they give the founder a composite name, appending the name of the lineage to the personal name, for example, Nyang Gaaliek, Nyang being the name of the person and Gaaliek the name of the lineage of his descendants.

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It is, I believe, in some such sense of the clan militant that we should interpret the spear symbolism of the clans. Nuer always speak of 'spear' where I have used the expression 'spear-name'. However, not only are there in almost all cases no actual spears, but it is not even the idea of any particular spear that they have in mind. What they have in mind is the clan as a whole for which the spear stands as a symbol not just as a spear but as representing the collective strength of the clan in its most conspicuous corporate activity, for clans and lineages are most easily and distinctly thought of as collectivities—through their identification with tribes and tribal segments—in relation to war. That the representation is of the clan as a battle host is shown by the Nuer statement about their clan spears that they only exist in the sense that 'they are in the mouths of men when they go to battle'. Two remarks made by Nuer give further support to an interpretation along these lines. One man said of all clan spears that '*tuokdien e wiu*', 'their origin is *wiu*', and that *wiu* is the *kwoth*, spirit, of all clan spears. There was some discussion about this remark among Nuer present, and I gathered from it that all clan spears in this wide and symbolic sense of the word *mut* as the battle host signify the clan as a social group in relation to God in the conception of him as Lord of Hosts. The man could not have meant that other clan spears were derived or copied from the spear *wiu*. That would have made no sense, both because there are no actual spears and also because the Gaatgankir clan who own the spear *wiu* are regarded by everybody as a Dinka clan of later origin than the true Nuer clans. That a spiritual conception of *wiu* was meant is further evident from a remark made to me by another Nuer, a man of exceptional ability, that when the Gaatgankir clan reach ten generations from their ancestor Kir—when they have grown up, so to speak—they will doubtless cease to respect (*thek*) the

the *mut*, why it is that the title of spiritual leaders in Dinkaland is taken from the fishing-spear (*bith*) instead of from the fighting-spear. An explanation might be put forward in terms of the analysis I have presented. Whereas among the Nuer the fighting-spear is the symbol of the clan because what is being symbolized is exclusiveness and opposition, among the Dinka the fishing-spear is the symbol of spiritual leadership because what is being symbolized is inclusiveness and unity. This is a guess but it receives some support from the fact that among the Nuer, at any rate in western Nuerland, when a leopard-skin priest goes to settle a feud he is accompanied by a kinsman called the *gwan biedh*, the master of the fishing-spear, which is the title of the Dinka spiritual leaders. However, this may be a loan from the Dinka.

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spear *wiu*, as they do at present, and will respect (the word is here used to balance the statement and not literally) only its name. As we should put it, they will not then feel the need for a material symbol of the spiritual relationship, and a verbal or ideational symbol will suffice. The association of clan spears with the spirit *wiu* is clear to us when we recall that the spirit is also associated with lightning with which, in this hypostasis, God strikes as man strikes with the spear.[1]

In invocations in which clans are involved as such God is appealed to, as I have explained earlier, in some refraction by which he is figured as their patron. This is the '*kwoth gwara*', 'the God of our fathers'. It is on such occasions also that the spear-name of the clan is shouted out as an exordium to the invocation. This is the '*mut gwara*', 'the spear of our fathers'. I would suggest that we have here in the spear-name a symbolic representation of the clan in its relation to God. God is invoked in relation to the clan through the spear of the ancestor held in imagination in the hand of one of his descendants.

If this interpretation is right, then in those sacrifices in which the clan as a whole is concerned the calling out of the clan spear-name by the officiant identifies the whole clan with the intention of the sacrifice as spoken in the invocation. The sacrificial spear in his hand becomes through the exordium the clan sacrificial spear through which in symbol the whole clan offers up the victim to God. The officiant in such sacrifices must therefore be a representative of the clan, what the Nuer call a *gwan buthni*; whereas in personal and piacular sacrifices, in which appeal is made on behalf of an individual or a number of individuals, anyone can officiate and the officiant is usually a senior member of the family or kin of the sacrificer. The intention, and therefore character, of the sacrificial act is different in the two cases. In the first it is of the nature of a validation, in the second of the nature of a *piaculum*; though in some situations there may be a broad overlap. Religion has always these two sides, the one concerned chiefly with the social life and the other with the relation of the individual soul to its God.

[1] Nuer, however, use for God striking a man with lightning the verbs *mar*, to strike, and *pim*, to strike in the sense of 'to hit' or 'to punch', and not *yiedh*, to strike in the sense of to thrust or to stab.

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231 883 776 animals, dedicates them to spirits, and in other ways makes formal use of them for religious purposes, nevertheless, the ox a father gives his son at initiation provides him with a direct means of communication with the spiritual world. It is more than a possession, more even than part of his social personality—it is a point of meeting between soul and spirit and has therefore a sacramental character also.

231 553 From the colours, their distribution, the shape of the horns, and other peculiarities of the ox of his initiation a youth takes, or is given by his companions, his *cot thak*, his ox-name. It may be the same word as that by which the ox's markings are indicated, but generally it combines the name for the markings with a prefix descriptive of something connected with the ox. For example, a man whose favourite ox is black and white (*rial*) may call himself *Luthrial* or *Luerial*, *luth* being a large cattle-bell and *lue* a long [561] tassel attached to one of the horns. At first only his age-mates may know his new name, but the older people soon get to know it too, for they hear his mates greet him by it and they also hear him shout it out as he displays himself with the ox in the cattle camps which are formed soon after initiation. Also, young men of about the same age call out their ox-names, with many embellishments, to one another at dances, often after a bout of duelling with clubs, and when in a dance two lines of youths stand opposite each other and shower ox-names on one another preparatory to a spectacular jump into the air in unison.

The calling of a youth by a name the same as, or derived from, that by which his favourite ox is referred to is perhaps the most striking example of, and evidence for, what Professor Seligman speaks of as 'identification'. Indeed, in listening to Nuer poems [538] one is often in doubt whether it is the ox or the man that is being spoken about. The representations are never entirely distinct. Somewhat different, though related and also very striking, is the ●[552] custom called *thak moc*, the calling out of the (name of the) ox. A man shouts out the name of his favourite ox—the ox's name, not his ox-name, which may be an elaboration of the ox's name —when he hurls his spear at an enemy or at his quarry when hunting or fishing, for example, '*ma rial*', 'black-and-white (ox)', or '*thakda ma rial*', 'my black-and-white ox'. In some of my earlier writings I have translated *moc* by 'invocation' and 'to invoke', following Driberg's translation of the Lango

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gwongo,[1] but I avoid doing so in an account of Nuer religion partly because I have in it used these words to translate another word, *lam*, but also because nothing is in fact invoked, and it is precisely the use of the words in connexion with oxen that has led to the erroneous conclusion that a favourite ox is a sort of 'tutelary spirit'. The ox is not called on, but called out. It is not an invocation but a cry of excitement and triumph as the striker strikes his foe or prey. That the ox is not being called on for aid is conclusively shown by the fact that in the same circumstances a Nuer may shout out instead '*tet cueda*' followed by a kinship term, usually that referring to the mother's sister: '*tet cueda malene*', 'my right hand, my mother's sisters'. Nuer are not calling on their mother's sisters for aid but using an emotive ejaculation, in which the ideas of strength (the right hand) and good-will (the mothers' sister) are combined. When they cry out the names of their oxen the ejaculation is a triumphant assertion of the self, for which the ox stands as a symbol. Also a man may cry out the name of his ox on occasions when there is no question of success or failure: as he brandishes his spear as though to strike in dancing, when making spectacular leaps into the air (*rau*), and sometimes in making a sacrificial invocation. It is both self-expression and a drawing of attention to the self.

It should be borne in mind that a man normally retains his ox-name and continues to be called by it and also to shout out the name of the ox from which it is derived long after the ox is no more in his possession. A man may part, though always with regret, with a favourite ox for marriage or sacrifice, or the ox may die. It is then replaced by another favourite, though when a man is older and has a herd of his own he may not identify himself in quite the same way or to the same extent as when he was young with any one particular ox. If another ox takes the place of the first favourite, the ox of initiation, its owner may take, or be given, a new ox-name derived from this second ox, the new name then either taking the place of the old or both being used; but most men keep for life the ox-names they acquire at the time of their initiation. It is the name of this ox that a man shouts out in war, hunting, dancing and leaping, and in sacrificial invocations, and

[1] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, 1923, pp. 109–10: 'One who takes a hostile spear on his shield invokes by name a favourite bull belonging to his father or maternal uncle (*gwongo mon*).'